



14 000411860

25X1

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

TOP SECRET

COR-0968

Copy 5 of 7

4 March 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Plans)

THROUGH : Chief, Administrative Branch DPT-AD/P

SUBJECT : Establishment of a Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Activities and the Possible Effect upon Project CORONA.

1. The Washington Post carried a story today (copy attached) stating that Senator Stuart Symington had been named to head a new Senate subcommittee to investigate "wasteful rivalry and duplication" in space programs.

2. The fact that Senator Symington has been a strong critic of the Administration defense policies leads me to suspect that his inquiries might well include the present DISCOVERER series. As you know, the press reaction to the recent DISCOVERER launching highlighted the benefits to the "Man in Space Program" and alluded to future technical advancements in weapons system development. Also, our intention to cloak future activities in an air of limited secrecy with only certain facts being given to the press and general public could make us a target of Mr. Symington's committee. In the past, he has made several comments which reflect his displeasure over the Administration tendency to hide behind security.

3. As you may have gathered by now, I am leading up to the suggestion that Mr. Symington be briefed on CORONA and our difficulties in dealing with the press to conceal the mission involved. In suggesting such action, however, I have several reasons in mind, all of which would, I feel, have benefit to our present 1959 program and any 1960 activities we may be charged with.

4. You will recall the problems we inherited when we assumed the responsibility of the SENTRY program. Many of the clues given the press that a reconnaissance capability was in being came from Congressional hearings where high government officials were questioned on the reconnaissance effort. A briefing of Senator Symington would alert him to the present program and offer us an opportunity to seek his assistance in furthering the CORONA cover. His previous position

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

as Secretary of the Air Force under the Truman Administration, I am sure left him with an appreciation of the problems we are faced with. To bring him into our confidence is a risk not without strong political overtones, but one I feel we must take or else suffer the results of probing questions asked of Agency heads who will be required to honestly respond.

5. Perhaps my approach to this situation is naive, however, I visualize a possible situation that would enable us to have certain questions asked of Agency heads such as Mr. Roy Johnson or Mr. Herbert York which would permit them to respond along the lines of our cover story. Such questions and answers would of course have to be cleared between Senator Symington and the particular Agency head scheduled to appear before the subcommittee. Such congressional hearings will obviously be of interest to the press and any statements made at such hearings will be taken as facts which the press will quote. We will have thus established a firm foundation to our present cover story and any future cover for reconnaissance activities. Such comments would remove any suspicion presently held by certain technical reporters.

6. It is totally possible that the subcommittee will not interest itself in specific programs but rather seek only line of command information in an effort to establish a more realistic division of responsibility within the missile community. Whatever the purpose of their inquiries, I believe we are faced with the serious problem of being inadvertently exposed. My main concern is the possibility that during the course of questioning any Agency or Department heads affiliated with the CORONA program, questions are apt to be asked which require answers that would destroy all of our cover efforts leaving us with nothing to "hang a 1960 hat on." A second exposure of the WS-117L program would mean disaster, for there are only certain activities that can be conducted with satellites. Of considerable concern, for example, is any questioning of Mr. Roy Johnson (ARPA) who has been in strong opposition to the use of the Ther Boost for photographic reconnaissance purposes. He is reportedly leaving government service and may feel free to air his views on this matter before a congressional subcommittee, if questioned on the technical qualities of one system as opposed to another.

7. An approach to Mr. Symington may not be the answer. Perhaps we should seek council with Senator Lyndon Johnson in an effort to determine whether specific programs are going to be examined or can be avoided. I am not familiar with the means available to the Agency

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

for approaching such individuals, however, I do know that General Schriever is a very close personal friend of Senator Johnson and this relationship may be the means of inquiring into the scope of the subcommittee's concern.

8. I realize the difficulties and possible misunderstanding of any attempt to exercise control over the substance of subcommittee hearings. However, I believe my suggestions to be in the national interest and I make them for the sole purpose of protecting a capability that has great potential to the safety of the nation. I suggest your early consideration of an approach to this problem.

SIGNED

Cover Officer
DPD-DD/P

25X1

Attachment: (1) Newspaper Clipping

Distribution:

- 1 & 2 - Addressee
- 3 - A/C-DPD-DD/P
- 4 - D & P DPD-DD/P
- 5 - Admin DPD-DD/P
- 6 - Security DPD-DD/P
- 7 - Cover DPD-DD/P
- 8 - RI Chrono DPD-DD/P

DPD-DD/P:

25X1

TOP SECRET

Copy 5 of 7

REF-0363